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**Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces
in the Middle East: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon**

United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the proposed budget for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the 12-month period from 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002 (A/56/431). During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General and the Officer-in-charge of the mission, who provided additional information.
2. UNIFIL was established by the Security Council in its resolution 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978 for operations in southern Lebanon. The mission's mandate has been extended several times by the Council, most recently in its resolution 1365 (2001) of 31 July 2001, by which the Council extended the mandate of the Force until 31 January 2002.
3. The Advisory Committee recalls that the Controller, in his letter dated 22 March 2001, informed the Committee that recent and prospective anticipated developments specific to certain peacekeeping missions (including UNIFIL) would likely affect their mandates, operational concepts, scope and scale of activities and related resource requirements. The Controller therefore requested that the Advisory Committee recommend to the General Assembly, as an interim measure, the granting of commitment authorization with an assessment in the amount of \$99.5 million gross for the maintenance of UNIFIL for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2001, pending submission of the detailed UNIFIL budget to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session.
4. On the recommendation of the Advisory Committee (see A/55/874, para. 10 (a)), the General Assembly, by its resolution 55/180 B of 14 June 2001, authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in the amount of \$99.5 million gross for the maintenance of UNIFIL for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2001, and decided that that amount should be assessed on Member States.



5. The Committee notes that amounts totalling \$3,262.0 million have been assessed on Member States in respect of UNIFIL since its inception to 31 December 2001 and that contributions received as at 30 September 2001 totalled \$3,018.9 million. Outstanding balances amount to \$243.1 million.

6. Cash balances of UNIFIL amounted to \$107.7 million as at 30 September 2001. The Advisory Committee was informed that troop-contributing countries had received payments totalling \$962,411,180 for the period from 1 December 1989 to 31 December 2000, and that an estimated amount of \$47,691,892 was still due for the period from 1 January to 31 August 2001. The Committee was also informed that reimbursement to troop-contributing Member States was expected to be up to date by the end of the year, subject to the availability of cash.

7. The cost estimates submitted by the Secretary-General for the period from 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002 amount to \$136,816,100 gross (\$132,983,100 net), inclusive of a \$201,200 budgeted voluntary contribution. The latter relates to the contribution by the Government of Lebanon of the UNIFIL House in Beirut since February 1998. The Committee sought clarification with regard to the procedures to be followed in respect of budgeting for additional support account requirements related to UNIFIL and was informed that it was the intention of the Secretary-General, on the basis of whatever decision the General Assembly might take regarding the additional resources under the support account for peacekeeping operations, to prorate the financing of the additional support account resources approved among the upcoming revised financial resolutions for the missions, whose updated budgets will be considered during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

8. This estimated requirement of \$136,614,900 (net of voluntary contributions of \$201,200) represents a decrease of \$62,303,000, or 31.3 per cent in total resources (gross), compared with the resources of \$198,917,900 approved for the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001. As shown in table 1 of the report, the proposed budget reflects a 26.7 per cent decrease under military personnel costs, a 9.7 per cent decrease under civilian personnel costs, a 56.7 per cent decrease in operational requirements, and a 3.9 per cent decrease in staff assessment costs; these reductions are partially offset by increases in other programmes.

9. As indicated in paragraph 11 of the report, the budget proposal is based on an average troop strength of 4,057 for the period in accordance with the Secretary-General's reconfiguration of the Force, which will be achieved through the non-replacement or reduction of units on the occasion of their normal rotations. On the basis of this approach, the troop strength of UNIFIL, which was planned at the level of 4,543 troops as at 31 August 2001, will gradually reduce to 3,613 by 31 May 2002 and will achieve the target level of 2,000 troops at the beginning of the next financial period (see A/56/431, annex I.C, para. 2).

10. UNIFIL will be supported by a civilian establishment of 491 staff, including 144 international (28 Professional, 82 Field Service and 34 General Service posts) and 339 local posts. The proposed civilian composition of UNIFIL reflects a decrease of 17 international posts and 41 local level posts. The Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 31 August 2001, there were 4,384 troops in UNIFIL; of the 161 authorized international staff posts, 134 were encumbered, and of the 380 authorized local staff posts, 350 were encumbered.

11. The Advisory Committee points out that no clear information was provided in the budget document as to the rationale for the proposed composition of the civilian personnel of UNIFIL. The Committee points out that the reduction of 17 international staff posts does not seem to be proportionate with the reduction in military personnel. The Committee therefore expects that a further reduction in international staff will be proposed for the financial period starting 1 July 2002.

12. The Advisory Committee notes that four Professional posts will be abolished in the Mine Action Coordination Cell and the related de-mining functions will be outsourced to contractors. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the de-mining programme of the Cell is supported by voluntary contributions and funded entirely through the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action, which is maintained by the Executive Office of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. A total contribution of \$1,837,262 to the Trust Fund was received as at 1 October 2001. A donors' conference took place in Beirut on 21 May 2001 at which two Governments pledged a contribution of \$50 million to support mine action in Lebanon; however, no payment has been made as of 11 October 2001.

13. The Committee notes from paragraph 11 of the report that, in accordance with the concept of operation, fewer resources are requested in the proposed budget for the maintenance and replacement of vehicles and major equipment and that the engineering effort will focus on renovation and maintenance of existing premises. Nevertheless, in view of the downsizing of the Force, the Committee cautions against what appears to be excessive replacement of various types of equipment; for example, a provision of \$140,260 is budgeted for replacement of 1,150 pieces of office furniture and a provision of \$117,481 is budgeted for replacement of 40 per cent of the items of the current inventory of accommodation equipment.

14. The Committee was informed that increased attention would be paid by the administration of UNIFIL to consolidating storage of spare parts in technologically advanced warehouses to be equipped with the Field Assets Control System. The Committee supports the idea in principle, although it cautions that such warehouses should be established in the mission area only when fully justified from the operational point of view and when economically feasible.

15. The Committee also notes from paragraph 11 of the report that a certain portion of the facilities in the area of operations will require new prefabricated structures that will be provided through the purchase of contingent-owned prefabricated units during the budgeted period. In this connection, the Committee requests that, before a decision is made with respect to such a purchase, a study should be conducted to ensure that it is justified and efficient.

16. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session in connection with the financing of UNIFIL are outlined in paragraph 5 of the report. Taking into account its comments and observations in the paragraphs above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposal.